

Subject: Safety Of Use Message (SOUM), TACOM SOUM 05-006,
Inspect Soldier fit and wear of ground combat helmets.

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D      XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX D
A      X                      "URGENT"                      X  A
N      X DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY TO SOLDIERS, OR DAMAGE      X  N
G      X TO ARMY EQUIPMENT WILL OCCUR IF THE INSTRUCTIONS X    G
E      X IN THIS MESSAGE ARE NOT FOLLOWED.                    X    E
R      XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX R
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References: PEO-SEQ MAM 04-001-013, Subject: Correct Fit and Wear Standards for the Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH) (can be downloaded from the PEO-Soldier website, <https://www.peosoldier.army.mil>).

1. Distribution: This is a Safety of Use Message. This message has not been transmitted to your subordinate commands. MACOM commanders will retransmit this message to all subordinate commands/activities within 24 hours of receipt of this message and acknowledge receipt of this message within five working days to: CDRTACOM, Warren MI, AMSTA-LC-LMIM, DSN 786-6096, commercial (586)574-6096 or DDN address: safetyofuse@tacom.army.mil.

2. Problem:

A. Surveys from OIF/OEF reveal that a significant number of Soldiers are not properly wearing the Personnel Armor System, Ground Troops (PASGT) Helmet (also known as the "Helmet, Ground Troops and Parachutists," the "K-pot" or the "Kevlar") or the Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH). Results of a U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory photo survey indicate that roughly half the Soldiers in the field are wearing the ground combat helmets improperly.

B. In cases where the PASGT or ACH helmets are fitted or worn improperly, the Soldier is exposed to increased risk of injury due to ballistic threats (fragmentation) or concussion. The majority of improperly sized/fitted helmets have been found to be too small.

3. User Actions:

A. Commanders are directed to inspect Soldier fit and wear of the ground combat helmets and to ensure correct fit and wear standards are enforced for both the PASGT and ACH in accordance with (IAW) this message. To comply, commanders should take the following steps:

1. Establish Unit POCs who will be responsible for refitting helmets.

2. Go to the PEO-Soldier website (<https://www.peosoldier.army.mil>) and download the manuals, Graphic Training Aid (GTA) 07-08-001, and video.

3. Obtain the calipers and measuring tapes to conduct the fittings.

4. Conduct inspections and fit both helmets IAW the instructions in the TMs and video as outlined below.

5. Commander Inspections:

a. Push down on top of helmet. Inspector should find no movement.

b. Ear canal coverage. The bottom of the PASGT should come to the bottom of the ear. The bottom of the ACH should come to the top of the ear canal opening.

c. Front look check. Both helmets side to side should be level.

d. Side look check. The PASGT front-to-back should be slightly inclined - look at helmet rim up to where the ear begins. The ACH front-to-back should be level - look at part of helmet by the ear.

e. Failure of any of these inspections justifies further investigation as to the fit and wear of the helmet.

B. These instructions also apply to all Central Issue Facilities (CIFs), Clothing Initial Issue Points (CIIPs), and new equipment fielding teams that issue the PASGT or ACH helmets. Before issuing either helmet, CIFs, CIIPs, and new equipment fielding teams shall size and fit the PASGT and ACH helmets in accordance with the references in this message, and verify correct fit and wear by having the Soldier install the suspension system or pads (depending on type of helmet) and donning the helmet.

C. Fit and wear of the PASGT: The PASGT helmet should be fitted in accordance with the instruction in Natick PAM 70-2 (available for download at the Program Executive Office-Soldier (PEO-Soldier) website, <https://www.peosoldier.army.mil>), by measuring head length, width, and circumference. Sizing instructions in Natick PAM 70-2 must be supplemented by the instructions in this SOUM. Improper wear may be caused by incorrect helmet shell size, improper adjustment of the headband, improper adjustment of the drawstring tab on the suspension system, or a combination of the above.

1. A properly fitted PASGT helmet should have a minimum 1/4 inch space between the head and the helmet. The helmet should not be so big that it blocks the wearer's vision or so small that ventilation, comfort, and safety suffer. A properly sized and fitted Helmet will sit level on the Soldier's head (side to side), with the lower edge of the front rim being set at the top of the eyebrow and level to the ground or slightly inclined with respect to the ground. When tightened, the chin strap of the PASGT will be centered with equal distances on each side between the chin cup and mounting location on the helmet. If the PASGT helmet sits too high or low on the head, use the adjustable drawstring tab on the suspension system to correct. Commanders can quickly inspect that the bottom of the PASGT comes to the bottom of the Soldier's ear. Failure of this inspection justifies further investigation as to the fit and wear of the PASGT.

2. Soldiers may also find that over time the PASGT will begin to fit more loosely. The headband and suspension system may need to be adjusted to compensate. If any of the components are broken or worn out, they may be replaced with the items and NSNs listed in paragraph 5A.

3. Visual examples of correct and incorrect fit and wear of the PASGT helmet and GTA 07-08-001 are available on the PEO-Soldier website, <https://www.peosoldier.army.mil>.

D. Fit and Wear of the ACH: Soldiers should be advised that the correct size of the ACH might not be the same size as their previously issued PASGT Helmet. Design features result in the front rim of the ACH resting about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch higher than the PASGT. The ACH should be fitted in accordance with the instruction in TM 10-8470-204-10 (available for download at the PEO-Soldier website, <https://www.peosoldier.army.mil>), by measuring head length, width, and circumference. Sizing instructions in TM 10-8470-204-10 must be supplemented by the instructions in this SOUM. Improper wear may be caused by incorrect helmet shell size, poor pad placement, improper fit, incorrect crown pad size, or a combination of the above.

1. The ACH should fit so that the front rim is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ inch above the eyebrows. A properly sized and fitted ACH will sit level on the Soldier's head (side to side), with the lower edge of the front rim being level to the ground or slightly inclined with respect to the ground. While looking upward by only moving his eyes, the wearer can test for proper fit by observing that the edge of the rim should just be in view. All ACH Helmets should be fitted with the thinner size 6 crown pad in the top of the helmet. The wearer should feel the crown pad touch the top of his head. Fit can be adjusted by adjusting the pad positions inside the helmet, tightening the retention straps, or exchanging the helmet shell for a larger size. Commanders can quickly inspect that the bottom of the ACH comes to the top of the Soldier's ear canal opening. Failure of this inspection justifies further investigation as to the fit and wear of the ACH.

2. Soldiers may also find that over time, the pads compress, and the retention straps may need to be adjusted to compensate. Periodically, the ACH pads should be inspected for wear and deterioration by squeezing the pads. Leaders need to periodically check the suspension pads and retention straps for serviceability. If any of the components are broken or worn out, they may be replaced with the items and NSNs listed in paragraph 5B and in TM 10-8470-204-10.

3. Since there is currently no small-sized ACH, Soldiers who receive a loose fit in a medium-sized ACH shell, with size 6 pads, are best accommodated in a medium-sized ACH, with size 8 pads, or a correctly fitted PASGT helmet.

4. A video of the proper fitting procedures, visual examples of correct and incorrect fit and wear of the ACH, GTA 07-08-001, and the TM are available on the PEO-Soldier website, <https://www.peosoldier.army.mil>.

E. It should be noted that when other items such as headsets, NBC mask, cold weather cap, etc are worn with either helmet, the headband